

THE JERUSALEM POST

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Tuesday, November 28, 1956
Kislev 19, 5711, Nisan 18, 5718

THE end of the Mandate and of drilling for oil in the Negev coincided. Wells were interrupted half-way, new plans postponed, and there is no sign of a fresh start.

Along the Mediterranean shore-line and in the Negev as far as the 30th Parallel, and near Sodom on the Dead Sea, the Mandatory Government granted 31 oil-prospecting licences, all but two of them to a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company. The two at Sodom went to the "Jordan Exploration Company," a subsidiary of Palestine Potash Ltd. What little drilling it did with the means at its disposal suggests that it might be worth going on. In effect, then, practically all rights over what is now Israel were conceded to an organization which controls, without fully exploiting, the vast supplies of oil in Iraq and on the Persian Gulf, and entered Palestine not so much to find new sources as to bar competitors who might strike oil and, having access to Mediterranean ports, might undersell it. It is perhaps early to determine Israel's attitude towards the pre-existing claims, with all their political implications, but it might not be out of place now to ask that the researches begun be completed on a purely ad hoc basis, without prejudice to any future grant of concessions.

To discover oil and market it on the grand scale, there is no escaping the indispensability of foreign capital. Drilling is laborious and expensive. At Huleikat, for instance, the drillers were due to go down to 10,000 feet, yet by the time Arab-Israeli hostilities broke out they had got no deeper than 3,300; and elsewhere not beyond preliminary soundings. There is no factual proof yet of disorder of oil in Israel: the general geological symptoms are hopeful but must be confirmed by a great deal of experiment. Even then, finding oil is not to say that it can be handled profitably, for the quantity may be limited or the local geology too difficult. We cannot ourselves pour millions into surveys and boreholes and not be certain of dividends. What funds we possess must be applied first to expanding agricultural and industrial production. Digging for oil is too hazardous a proposition for us at present, and we should be frank about it, but at least we can limit the field of consideration to Jewish companies who will be ready to match their private capital with Government investment. When the Billion Dollar drive begins to bear fruit, some millions of it could be used to advantage in a partnership of that kind, either to find oil or to make sure, once for all, that there is none.

COMMUNISM USED TO FIGHT FRENCH Vietminh Nationalists Look to U.N.

By Michael Davidson

HANOI

VIETMINH nationalists whom I have talked with this week believe there is still a way out of the Indo-China dilemma which could be accepted by the non-communist majority of the rebel movement even if the communist minority which controls the movement would almost certainly reject it.

They seem confident that should this project look like succeeding, the great majority of nationalists — the French estimate that 80 per cent of Vietnam is non-communist — could be detached from the Marxist core. But they insist they are speaking only for themselves: communication with the nationalist leaders is at the moment too lengthy a business to know just what they are thinking or to sound out their feelings on these proposals.

The unalterable premise from which the idea proceeds remains, of course, the departure of the French; my friends doggedly contend that they would rather live even under communism — Vietnam communism — than under French rule. Unless the French go, Vietnam will continue fighting indefinitely, they say; and they are quite confident, now that China can help and now that the frontier is open for the free passage of trained Vietminh battalions and equipment, that Vietnam can win in the long run even if the French get many more American weapons.

U.N. Aid

It is felt that at this moment on France: she is in such a dangerous predicament in Indo-China and so dependent on American help that possibly U.N. could persuade her, by argument or political pressure, to withdraw voluntarily — rather than Britain withdrew from Palestine, but with one vital difference.



French commandos covering the retreat to Hanoi captured an over-eager Vietminhese carrying a communist flag.

My friends want the French withdrawal not to create a vacuum — nor leave the country open to communist engulfment: it would be followed by a request by Vietnam, with Vietminh nationalist concurrence, that the U.N. come in to assume temporarily the administration, and policing of the country until elections are held and an inclusive Vietnam administration set up.

But on one point these Vietminh nationalists are adamant: there must be no U.N. army, no U.N. bombardments such as Korea saw. They believe that the Vietnamese, including the Vietminh nationalist forces, could deal with the communist minority — who presumably would either disappear into China or start guerrilla sabotage on Malaya lines.

My friends agree that the Vietminh nationalists would take this course because they

are fighting solely to oust the French, not to introduce communism. They say, too, that they are convinced that Ho Chi-minh himself, still nominally and internationally the Vietminh leader, is a nationalist first and a communist second. They point to his whole career of "liberation" — his struggle against the Japanese and his association with Chiang Kai Shek when the Kuomintang was a liberating movement; and they repeat what has been said so often, that it is French policy which has driven Ho further into the arms of Moscow communism. Today he has no alternative but to rely upon the Chinese communists.

But they also insist on this: if some such solution is not found, based absolutely upon French withdrawal, Vietnam will win the battle in the end and the country will go communist — "and rightfully," they add, "if it was communist leadership which drove the French out." And not many Vietnamese fear communism, they say; they have not much to lose, anyway.

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Readers' Letters

CIVIC CLEANLINESS

To the Editor of The POST
Sir, — It was with some amusement, that I read the reply given by Mr. David Hachon, Deputy Mayor of Haifa, to one of your readers' letters headed "Swoop on Sabras."

I would invite the attention of Mr. Hachon, who seems to have at heart the cleanliness of Haifa town, to numerous complaints addressed to the Municipality not only by myself, but by other residents in my area, to the disgusting state of affairs existing in Allenby Road, Haifa, due to the overflowing of the drainage system and cesspits from houses Nos. 141, 165, 169, and 171, thus making the area a breeding place for mosquitoes.

These conditions have been prevailing for over one year and, as far as I am concerned, the only response to my complaint has been a letter from Haifa Municipality, to the effect that a new sewage system would be under construction after some form of agreement had been reached with the Custodian of Abandoned Property. Exactly when this new system will be completed is still a mystery and it strikes me that it would be quite fitting if the Municipality would apply para 33 of the Municipal Council By-Law — 1935 — to whoever is responsible for this pollution of one of the main streets in Haifa.

Yours, etc.,

GEORGE NANJIKIAN

Haifa, September 28.

Town Clerk's Reply

To the Editor of The POST
Sir, — The situation has worsened because these houses are now much more crowded than when they were occupied by Arabs. Also the new tenants use a larger quantity of water than that used by their predecessors. Therefore the sewage installation from the days of the Arab population is not sufficient for the needs of the present inhabitants.

This property comes under the power of the Custodian of Abandoned Property, who to our regret fail to comply with the many requests of the Mayor and the various other clerks from this office, and to the many demands to carry

out repairs needed to safeguard the health of the public. Such demands never met with the attention they deserve. A drainage system to part of Zeitun Quarter is now being installed and will be completed in the near future.

Yours, etc.,

TOWN CLERK
HAIFA MUNICIPALITY
Haifa, November 8.

PRICE OF DRINKS

To the Editor of The POST
Sir, — The official in charge of the Customs and Excise Department informs us in yesterday's issue of your paper of a very considerable raise in the prices of wines and liquors. Such a decision strikes directly at the vast majority of the wage-earners of the country who are gradually being deprived of the most elementary amenities of civilized life. They are thus forced to become a population of beer drinkers — which is in itself very often unobtainable — of smokers of cigarettes of the poorest brand, and able to dress themselves only in the cheapest khaki clothes.

Does the additional Government revenue derived by such a procedure really compensate for the ill-feeling created as a result of it?

A public campaign should be started with a view to halting such "surprises" which are poured upon us at such frequent intervals.

Yours, etc.,

B. KOMAROVSKY
Haifa, November 17.

BUS TICKETS

To the Editor of The POST
Sir, — One basic reason for Tel Aviv's inadequate bus service is the long time wasted in selling tickets, amounting to about 50 per cent of the time taken for the actual run. If this time were cut down to 10 per cent, it would mean a saving of 40 per cent on each run, in other words four buses would have been added to every 10 running on one line!

This can be done by a simple device made use of the world over: the introduction of bus-conductors ("clippies"). The general speed-up will not only save millions of man-hours but will be most beneficial to passengers' and drivers' nerves, besides reducing queuing and crowding.

Why does the Ministry of Communications not impose these improvements as essential for efficient service, and why does the Ministry of Finance not insist on the resulting economy in fuel and vehicles?

Yours, etc.,

G. K.
(Name and address supplied)
Tel Aviv, Oct. 2.

Dan's Opinion

Sir, — We do not consider that the introduction of bus conductors ("clippies") will solve the problem of speeding up the movement in the very crowded situation nowadays. We have, however, introduced in many stations the selling of tickets before the passengers board the buses. It is our intention to add as many selling stations as possible, but this question is related to another proposal which will also speed up the journey — the proposal of levelling up the fares and reducing the number of tariffs in the city.

This question is under consideration by Government authorities and the Municipality and we hope that a solution will be found in the near future.

Yours, etc.,

DAN MANAGEMENT
Tel Aviv, Oct. 20.

MILITARY SERVICE

To the Editor of The POST
Sir, — Is it true that young men of military age, fit for military service (20 in my case) who have served three years in the Police, are exempted from military service after this period of service in the Police?

Yours, etc.,

VICTOR POLITI
Haifa, September 15.

Defence Ministry's Reply

To the Editor of The POST
Sir, — In answer to Victor POLITI we have to inform you that according to information received from the Manpower Sections of the Army and the Defence Ministry no change has occurred regarding Police men's service in the army as published.

Yours, etc.,

Public Relations Section
Defence Ministry
Hakiry, November 8.

Service in the Police Force will be regarded as military service only in respect of those persons sent to the Police through the Army Recruiting Office.

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